



# Keys to Safety

A Parent's Guide  
to Online Safety,  
Child Abduction,  
& Runaway Issues

Office of the Attorney General

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# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO ONLINE SAFETY, CHILD ABDUCTION, AND RUNAWAY ISSUES

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Dear Fellow Arkansans:

As your Attorney General, one my greatest responsibilities is to help protect Arkansans who are least able to protect themselves, especially our children.

Because of their innocence and inquisitive minds, children can be lured into compromising situations by offenders who want to take advantage of their trust. Children are often advised to keep a safe distance from “strangers.” Unfortunately, most children are victimized by someone they know ... hardly the stranger they imagined. As a parent, your most important tool is the ability to teach your child how to recognize and respond to unsafe situations.

Our office is here to help you learn the facts about online computer safety, child abduction, and runaway issues. Preparing child-safety resource materials is one of many services the Attorney General’s Office provides. We have compiled this easy-to-use resource booklet to help parents, guardians, and educators keep children safe.

I hope that this child-safety manual will be a helpful resource in your home and community. I am committed to ensuring the safety of our state’s most precious resource – our children.

Sincerely,

Mike Beebe

This manual has been adapted from information provided by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a public-private partnership that serves as the national clearinghouse for information on missing children and the prevention of child victimization. This program was supported by a grant awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

# Child Information Sheet

Keep this sheet in a safe place. If any child is missing,  
this information will be critical to law enforcement.

Update the information if it changes.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Physician \_\_\_\_\_

Eye Color \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses \_\_\_\_\_ Contacts \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion (circle one) Fair Olive Light Brown Dark Brown Albino Other \_\_\_\_\_

Build (circle one) Slight Medium Heavy

Personality (circle one on each line) Outgoing Average Shy  
Very Independent Average Very Dependent  
Loud Average Soft Spoken

Hand preference (right or left) \_\_\_\_\_ Languages spoken \_\_\_\_\_

Any physical handicaps \_\_\_\_\_

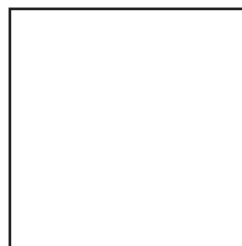
Has the child ever run away for more than 24 hours? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information (unusual habits, speech defects, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Child's signature (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ (cursive) \_\_\_\_\_

Place child's hair strands below.  
(Must have root attached.)

DNA I.D. (Hair)



Right thumb print

Place Child's  
Photo Here



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# Introduction

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Children are routinely told to “stay away from strangers.” Unfortunately, many children are abducted or exploited by people they might know casually but whom the child’s parents might not necessarily know. In fact, 76 percent of all kidnapped children are abducted by someone they know – either family members (49 percent) or acquaintances (27 percent). Only 24 percent are kidnapped by strangers, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

The term “stranger” misleads children, causing them to think that they should only be wary of individuals who are unfamiliar to them. Instead, children must be taught to be on the lookout for certain situations or actions, rather than just certain individuals.

The Internet is an especially dangerous place for children to be approached by strangers. These “Internet predators,” along with other exploiters and abductors, often initiate seemingly innocent contact with their victims. They might try to get to know the child and befriend him or her. They use subtle approaches that both parents and children should keep in mind.



Children must know that it is okay to say “no” – even to an adult. Parents should explain to their children that the child’s personal safety is more important than being polite and that people on the Internet are not always who they seem. Children should also be taught that there will always be someone who can help them.

Remember: it’s easier for a child to understand a clear, calm, and reassuring message about situations and actions to look out for than a particular profile or image of a “stranger.” And teenagers should especially be warned about the dangers of being “online.” Online “friends” are often not who they say they are.

# Online Safety



The huge growth of the Internet in recent years means more people are going online. In schools and in many homes, children are logging onto commercial services and private bulletin boards. There are many educational and entertaining benefits to going online. Unfortunately, there are also risks for children who use the Internet.

## Recognizing Risks

Teenagers are particularly at risk because they often use the computer unsupervised and are more likely than younger children to participate in online discussions regarding companionship, relationships, or sexual activity. Some risks are:

- Being exposed to inappropriate material that is sexual, hateful, or violent in nature, or encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal;
- Providing information or arranging an encounter that could risk your child's safety or the safety of other family members;
- Doing something that has negative legal or financial consequences, such as giving out a parent's credit-card number.



Although crimes are being committed online, that's not a reason to avoid using the Internet. Instead, learn how to be "cyber smart" to better safeguard your family.

**LEARN HOW TO BE "CYBER SMART"  
IN ORDER TO BETTER SAFEGUARD YOUR FAMILY.**

**A PARENT'S GUIDE TO ONLINE SAFETY,  
CHILD ABDUCTION, AND RUNAWAY ISSUES**

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# Guidelines for Parents

While children need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the “real world” also apply online. By taking responsibility for your children’s online computer use, you can greatly minimize potential risks of being online.

## Make it a family rule to:

- Never give out identifying or personal information – home address, school name, telephone number, age, marital status, or financial information in chat rooms or bulletin boards;
- Don’t post photographs of your children on Web sites that are available to the public;
- Inquire about your Internet Service Provider’s (ISP’s) privacy policies and exercise your options for how your personal information may be used;
- If you have cause for concern about your children’s online activities, talk to them. Remember – how you respond will determine whether your children confide in you the next time they encounter a problem;
- Never allow your children to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they’ve “met” online unless they’ve received your permission;
- If you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s CyberTip Line at 1-800-843-5678 or [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com);
- Instruct your children not to click on any links that are contained in e-mail from persons they don’t know. Such links could lead to inappropriate Web sites;
- Remember that people online may not be who they seem. Someone indicating that “she” is a “12-year-old girl” could in reality be a 40-year-old male predator;
- Be careful about offers that involve personally coming to a meeting, having someone visit your house, or sending money or credit-card information;
- Keep the computer in a family room rather than the child’s bedroom;
- Share an e-mail account with your children to oversee their mail, and consider joining your children when they are in private chat areas;
- Utilize the filtering features built into the popular Internet browsers and software programs that block areas known to be inappropriate for children. You can find information about filtering programs at [www.get-netwise.org/tools/](http://www.get-netwise.org/tools/);
- Know the lingo used by teenagers in chat rooms and e-mail correspondence. See Chat Dictionary in back of this booklet.



# Tips for Your Teen's Online Safety

The most important thing to remember is that when your teen is online in any kind of a public forum, anyone can read whatever he or she posts. They should never post anything on the Internet that they wouldn't want known to the public.

Here are tips to teach your teens to help protect them online.

## Keep Your Identity Private

If your teen is in any type of public forum, make sure he or she avoids giving out his or her name, mailing address, telephone number, school name, or any other information that could help someone determine identity. The same applies to information about family and friends.

## Never Get Together with Someone You "Meet" Online

The biggest danger to a teen's safety is getting together with someone he or she "meets" online. Make sure your children know they can never be positive that people they meet online are who they say they are. Teach your teens that if they're unsure whether to meet with someone, they should discuss it with you first.



## Never Respond to Messages That Are Hostile, Belligerent, or Inappropriate

It isn't your children's fault if they get a message that makes them feel uncomfortable. If they get such a message, they shouldn't respond. Instead, teach your teen to show such a message to you or to another trusted adult to see if there is anything that can be done to put a stop to it.

## Talk with Your Parents about Ground Rules for Going Online

It's important that parents and teens agree when it comes to their online activities. This includes when they can go online, how long they can stay online, and what activities they can participate in online. Teens should be taught that communicating with parents doesn't mean that they have to give up their privacy. It just means that an agreement based on mutual trust and understanding has been reached.

# Chat Dictionary

Chat rooms have a language of their own. Parents can use this guide to de-code what they may see their kids typing on the computer when chatting with others online.

*poof*	has left the chat	GTG	Got To Go	OTTOMH	Off The Top of My Head
^5	High 5	GTSY	Glad To See You	PAW	Parents Are Watching
20	Location	H&K	Hug and Kiss	PDS	Please Don't Shoot
73	Best Regards	HABU	Have A Better 'Un	PM	Private Message
88	Love and Kisses	HAGN	Have A Good Night	PMFJI	Pardon Me For Jumping In
100	Nature Calls/Pit Stop	HAGU	Have A Good 'Un	PMP	Peed My Pants
404	I have no clue (what you get when you enter a wrong URL)	HAND	Have A Nice Day	PPL	People
12345	Talk About School	HHIS	Hanging Head in Shame	POAHF	Put On A Happy Face
A/S/L?	Age/Sex/Location?	HI	Laughter	S	Smile
ADN	Any Day Now	HIG	How's It Going	QSL	Reply
AFAIK	As Far As I Know	HT	Hi There	QSO	Conversation
AFK	Away From Keyboard	HUB	Head Up "Rear"	QT	Cutie
ASAP	As Soon As Possible	IAE	In Any Event	RL	Real Life
B4N	Bye For Now	IC	I See	ROFL	Rolling On Floor Laughing
BBL	Be Back Later	IGP	I Gotta Pee	ROFLAPMP	ROFL And Peeing My Pants
BBN	Bye Bye Now	ILY	I Love You	ROFLMAO	ROFL My "Rear" Off
BBS	Be Back Soon	IMNSHO	In My Not So Humble Opinion	ROFLMAOAY	ROFLMAO At You
BEG	Big Evil Grin	IMO	In My Opinion	ROFLMAOPMP	ROFLMAO Peeing My Pants
BF	Boyfriend	IMCO	In My Considered Opinion	ROFLMAOWTIME	ROFLMAO With Tears In My Eyes
BIBO	Beer In, Beer Out	IMHO	In My Humble Opinion	ROFLUTS	ROFL Unable to Speak
BL	Belly Laugh	IMS	I'm Sorry	RME	Rolling My Eyes
BMGWL	Busting My Gut With Laughter	IOW	In Other Words	ROTFL	Rolls On The Floor Laughing
BRB	Be Right Back	IRL	In Real Life	RT	Real Time
BTDT	Been There, Done That	ITIGBS	I Think I'm Gonna Be Sick	RTFM	Read The Freaking Manual!
BTW	By The Way	IWALU	I Will Always Love You	SETE	Smiling Ear To Ear
BWL	Bursting With Laughter	J4G	Just For Grins	SHID	Slaps Head In Disgust
C&G	Chuckle and Grin	JAM	Just A Minute	SNERT	Snot-Nosed Egotistical Rude Teenager
CICO	Coffee In, Coffee Out	JK	Just Kidding	S^ S'UP	What's Up?
CID	Crying In Disgrace	JMO	Just My Opinion	SNAFU	Situation Normal; All Fouled UP
CNP...	Continued (in my) Next Post	JLYK	Just To Let You Know	SO	Significant Other
CP	Chat Post(a chat message)	KISS	Keep It Simple, Stupid	SOT	Short Of Time
CRBT	Crying Real Big Tears	KIT	Keep In Touch	SOTMG	Short Of Time Must Go
CSG	Chuckle Snicker Grin	KOC	Kiss On Cheek	STO	Sticking Out Tongue
CU	See You	KOL	Kiss On Lips	SUAKM	Shut Up and Kiss Me
CYA	See You (Seeya)	KOTC	Kiss On The Cheek	SWAK	Sealed With A Kiss
CYAL8R	See You Later (Seeyalata)	KWIM	Know What I Mean	SWAG	Scientific Wild A** Guess
DLTBBB	Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite	L	Laugh	SWL	Screaming with Laughter
DOM	Dirty Old Man	L8R	Later	SYS	See You Soon
DOS	Dozing Off Soon	L8R G8R	Later 'Gator	SYT	Sweet Young Thing
DTRT	Do The Right Thing	LHM	Lord Help Me	TA	Thanks Again
DWB	Don't Write Back	LHO	Laughing Head Off	TCOY	Take Care Of Yourself
DWPKOTL	Deep Wet Passionate Kiss On The Lips	LHU	Lord Help Us	TIA	Thanks In Advance
EG	Evil Grin	LMAO	Laughing My "Rear" Off	TILUI	Tell It Like It Is
EMSG	E-mail Message	LMSO	Laughing My Socks Off	TNT	Till Next Time
ES	Enough Said	LOL	Laugh Out Loud	TNX	Thanks
F2F	Face To Face	LSHMBB	Laughing So Hard My Belly is Bouncing	TOY	Thinking Of You
FC	Fingers Crossed	LSHMBH	Laughing So Hard My Belly Hurts	TFN	Ta Ta For Now
FTBOMH	From The Bottom Of My Heart	LSHTTARDML	Laughing So Hard The Tears Are Running Down My Leg	TTYL	Talk To You Later
FUBAR	Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition	LTNS	Long Time No See	TY	Thank You
FWIW	For What It's Worth	LTS	Laughing To Self	WAYD	What Are You Doing
G	Grin	LUWAMH	Love You With All My Heart	WB	Welcome Back
GAL	Get A Life	LY	Love Ya	WBS	Write Back Soon
GF	Girlfriend	LY4E	Love You Forever	WEG	Wicked Evil Grin
GFN	Gone For Now	MTF	More To Follow	WKF	Well Known Fact
GGP	Gotta Go Pee	NRN	No Reply Necessary	WTG	Way To Go
GL	Good Luck	NADT	Not A Damn Thing	WTH	What/Who The Heck
GM	Good Morning	NVNG	Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained	YBS	You'll Be Sorry
GMAB	Give Me A Break	OIC	Oh, I See	YG	Young Gentleman
GMBO	Giggling My Butt Off	OL	Old Lady (significant other)	YL	Young Lady
GMTA	Great Minds Think Alike	OM	Old Man (significant other)	YM	Young Man
GN	Good Night	OMG	Oh My God	YW	You're Welcome
GNSTDLTBBB	Good Night, Sleep Tight, Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite	OTOH	On The Other Hand		



# Basic Rules of Safety for Children

It's never too early to start teaching small children about safety. As soon as your children can articulate a sentence, they can begin to learn how to protect themselves against abduction and exploitation. Children should be taught basic rules of safety.

*Teach children to look out for certain situations or actions, rather than certain individuals.*

## Here are some general tips for protecting your child:

- ✓ Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities;
- ✓ Be sensitive to changes in your children's behavior; it's a signal that you should talk about the cause of the changes;
- ✓ Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts;
- ✓ Teach your children to trust their own feelings; assure them that they have the right to say "no" to anything they sense is wrong;
- ✓ Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell you or another adult immediately.

## What to Teach Your Children

- ✓ If your children are separated from you in a public place, make sure they don't wander around looking for you. Instruct them to go to a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found department. They should quickly tell the person in charge that they have become lost and need help finding you.
- ✓ Tell them not to get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have given them permission.
- ✓ Let them know that if someone follows them on foot or in a car, they should run away from him or her.
- ✓ Teach them not go with someone who asks directions, wants them to help look for a lost puppy, or tells them that you are in trouble.
- ✓ Make sure they know that if someone tries to take them somewhere, they should quickly get away and scream, "This man (woman) is trying to take me away!" or "This person is not my father (mother)!"
- ✓ Instruct them to always use the buddy system – never go places alone.
- ✓ Let them know that if someone wants to take their picture, they should say "no" and tell you or their teacher or a trusted adult.
- ✓ Teach them that no one should touch them on parts of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit, nor should they touch anyone else in those areas.
- ✓ Tell them they have the right to say "no" to someone who tries to take them somewhere, touches them, or makes them feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused.

## Day Care

Recommendations from family, friends, and neighbors are excellent ways to find good day-care providers. Lists of licensed day-care providers may also be available from the local department of social services, county day-care licensing offices, local schools, and community resource centers.

In selecting a child-care facility, use these tips:

- ✓ Visit prospective day-care centers, take tours and interview staffers, observing them with the children;
- ✓ Ask about the education and training of all personnel who interact with children;
- ✓ Arrange to meet with other individuals who may have contact with your child, such as teachers' assistants, bus drivers, custodians, and relatives of the day-care personnel;
- ✓ Make certain that the staff-to-child ratio meets county and state licensing standards;
- ✓ Make sure no areas are off-limits to parents;
- ✓ Inspect the bathrooms for isolated areas. (Many facilities have half-doors to allow adults to supervise the children, while still providing privacy for children;)
- ✓ Make sure that children are properly supervised during naptime;
- ✓ Learn the day-care's discipline policy – how it is administered, under what circumstances it is used and what form it takes;
- ✓ Visit unannounced;
- ✓ After selecting a facility, get to know the staff first-hand by involving yourself in the center's activities;
- ✓ Talk to your children each day about what happens at the day-care center.



*Make sure no areas of the child-care facility are off-limits to parents.*

## Baby Sitters

Whether you work full-time or are simply going out for the evening, you want the best possible care for your children while you are away. Before you hire anyone to watch over your children, make sure that he or she is a mature, experienced, and capable individual who truly cares about the welfare of your child.

### Finding a Baby Sitter

- ✓ The best sources for locating baby sitters are the recommendations of family, friends, and neighbors.
- ✓ You may also advertise for a baby sitter through your local high school, church, civic organization or other sources you trust.

### Hiring the Baby Sitter

- ✓ Carefully check a potential sitter's references, contacting past employers, teachers, counselors, relatives, friends, or neighbors.
- ✓ Interview several prospective sitters personally and observe their interaction with your child.
- ✓ Outline the baby sitter's duties and responsibilities and discuss how he or she might react to different emergency situations.
- ✓ Verify the sitter's contact information, including a home address and telephone number and identifying information such as a driver's license number.

For more information about where to find child-care facilities in Arkansas, call the Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Line at 1-800-445-3316 or 501-682-4871. For more information about licensing and registration of child-care centers and homes, call 501-682-8590.

For more information about Arkansas child care, visit [www.state.ar.us/childcare](http://www.state.ar.us/childcare).

# After School

Here are some steps that you and your child can take to help ensure a positive after-school experience and some decisions to make before allowing your child to go home alone.

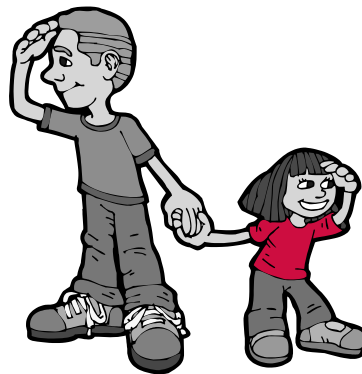
## Should Your Children Be Left Home Alone?

- ✓ Determine if there are community organizations providing after-school programs.
- ✓ Ask your children how they feel about being alone.
- ✓ Determine if your children have the maturity and initiative to assume the responsibility of being home alone.
- ✓ Decide how long your children will be alone, how accessible you or another trusted adult will be in case of an emergency and how safe the neighborhood is.
- ✓ Make sure you've set specific rules that your children are to follow while they're alone.
- ✓ Provide specific instructions on how to reach you and another trusted adult at all times.
- ✓ Remind your children that you're in charge, even if it is from a distance.

## What Should Parents Know?

As a parent, you should make sure you have the following:

- ✓ A daily schedule of homework, chores, and activities for your children to follow;
- ✓ A list near the telephone that includes numbers for you, the police, the fire department, an ambulance service, your doctor, a poison control-center, and a trusted adult who's available in case of emergency;
- ✓ A plan if you are detained and what to do if your children's plans change;
- ✓ Instructions about watching television, using a computer and household appliances, talking on the telephone, and inviting friends over.



*Teach children to always check out the house when entering.*

## What Should Your Children Know?

Once you've decided to proceed, you should check to make sure your children:

- ✓ Know their full name, address, and telephone number;
- ✓ Know your full name, the exact name of the place where you work, your work telephone number, and mobile phone number;
- ✓ Don't walk or play alone on the way home, and never take shortcuts home;
- ✓ Stay away from bodies of water, unless they are with an adult;
- ✓ Wear reflectors and protective clothing when playing outside after dark;
- ✓ Always check out the house when entering. If something doesn't look or seem right, go to a safe place to call for help;
- ✓ Always lock the door after entering and make sure that the house is secure;
- ✓ Immediately check in with you upon returning home to let you know that they have arrived safely;
- ✓ Tell callers that you can't come to the telephone instead of letting people know that they are home alone and offer to take a message;
- ✓ Don't open the door for or talk to anyone who comes to the home unless the person is a trusted family friend or relative, and the visit has been pre-approved by you;
- ✓ Know how to make an emergency telephone call to request help.

An additional resource for your child may be "Phone Friend," a telephone help line operated by the Northwest Arkansas Crisis Intervention Center. This help line operates 24 hours each day and offers assistance to children who may be home alone and need help or might be faced with difficult situations. Your child can call toll-free 1-888-723-3225.

# New Neighborhoods

Moving to a new neighborhood represents a big change for everyone in the family. It's an exciting but potentially stressful or confusing time, especially for children. Here are a few rules to reinforce and practice with your children to help ensure a safer and happier new home:

- Teach your children their new address and telephone number;
- Help your children learn the location of their new school and visit before their first day;
- If your children ride the school bus, visit the bus stop and teach them the bus number;
- Remind your children to always stay with other children and report any unusual incidents to you;
- List emergency telephone numbers by your telephone as soon as possible;

- Make certain your children always stay on main roads and determine some public places they can go to for assistance;
- Make a map with your children of the acceptable routes to school, the playground, store, and similar locations;
- Remind your children that they must *check first* before they go anywhere with their new friends.



Most important, remember to practice these safety rules with your children. Make outings around the new neighborhood a chance to put their skills to the test.

*After a move, **teach your children** their new address and telephone number as soon as possible.*



## Safe Shopping

**Going shopping with your children can be a safe, enjoyable experience if you follow a few simple rules:**

- Make certain your children know to stay with you at all times while shopping and to always *check first* before going anywhere;
- Always accompany young children to the restroom;
- Never leave your children alone at stores, video arcades, movie theaters or playgrounds as a convenient "baby sitter" while shopping;
- If children become separated from you, teach them to look for someone in the store who can help them (such as a uniformed security officer or store salesperson with a name tag);

- Do not allow your children to wear clothing displaying their names. It can bring unwelcome attention from inappropriate people;
- Teach your children how to use a public telephone, locate adult sources of help within the mall or a store, and practice having them check first with you before going anywhere within a mall or store.

If you become separated from your child while shopping, immediately notify the store's management. Most stores have a plan in place to locate missing children. The "Code Adam" alert program is a radio alert used by many retailers. Learn more about "Code Adam" at [www.ag.state.ar.us](http://www.ag.state.ar.us) and click the "Missing Children" link.



# Teen Safety

One of the biggest challenges facing teens and their parents is that of running away. Here is some information to help you prevent or deal with a runaway teen.

## Reasons a Child May Run Away

- **Family crisis** – Divorce, separation, drug or alcohol abuse, a death or physical, mental, or sexual abuse.
- **Freedom** – Some young people think that life without their parents would be easier or “hassle-free.”
- **Fear of punishment** – Young people may fear the response of a parent to a bad mistake or the response of law enforcement to a crime.
- **Unreasonable demands** – A child may feel that a parent expects too much or is too strict.
- **Series of problems** – Running away is often viewed as a last resort to a series of problems at home, school, or even with the law.
- **Being thrown out** – Leaving home may not be the young person’s choice, as a parent may force them to leave.

## Signs That a Child May Be Thinking of Running Away

- Changes in behavior or patterns of daily life – not eating or overeating; sleeping frequently or not sleeping; increased isolation from family members and/or friends; sudden change of friends or companions; mood swings.
- Rebellious behavior – drop in grades, truancy, breaking rules at home and/or school, argumentative.
- Disclosure of intentions to run away – hinting, threatening, telling friends, or other adults.
- Accumulation of money and possessions – savings or checking account withdrawal (over time or all at once); keeping clothing in a bag or backpack.

## Prevention Tips

- Pay attention when your teenagers are talking to you.
- Be open and honest with your teens. Let them know when you are pleased or displeased with their behavior.
- Provide accurate information about drugs, sex, and alcohol. Answer your teenagers’ questions, but don’t lecture them.
- Help your teens to see all the possible consequences of a particular decision. Encourage responsible decision-making.
- Help build your teens’ self-esteem. Make them feel important by praising them for their effort and accomplishments.
- Encourage your teens to explore their interests before making a decision about college or work. Taking an interest in schoolwork promotes a positive learning experience.
- If necessary, seek professional help.



## Facts to Teach Your Teens about Running Away

Running away can be a frightening experience — for both you and your teenager. A runaway becomes vulnerable as soon as he or she leaves home — potentially falling victim to drugs, drinking, crime, sexual exploitation, pornography, and/or prostitution. The streets are full of people who seek to profit from a child's vulnerability. Most runaways find problems in locating food, clothing, shelter, and money.

Teach your teens that if they are thinking about running away, don't. Help them identify people who can assist them. Encourage them to talk about their problems and concerns with you, their friends, teachers, a mental-health professional, a clergy member, or other trusted adult. Help them seek the assistance of a trained counselor or professional.

To identify qualified professionals in your area, contact the local Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services, or other public or private agencies that help families. Also, members of the clergy, school personnel, or the law-enforcement community can direct you to available services and resources.

Once your teen returns home, work together to resolve the problems that prompted him or her to leave in the first place. If you are unable to deal with family or personal problems effectively, seek the assistance of a trained counselor or professional.

A parent's worst nightmare is learning that his or her child is lost or missing. However, there are some ways to prepare yourself in case it ever occurs. With some planning, you can increase the chances of your child being returned safely.

### **There are several ways that you can be prepared in the event that your child is ever lost or missing:**

- Keep a complete written description of your child, including hair and eye color, height, weight, date of birth, and specific physical attributes;
- Take color photographs of your child every six months. School portraits are preferable;
- Make sure your dentist prepares full charts on your child and updates them with each exam;
- Find out from your doctor where your child's medical records are located. All permanent scars, birthmarks, broken bones, and medical needs should be recorded;
- Arrange with your local police department to have your child fingerprinted. The police department will give you the fingerprint card; they will not keep a record of your child's prints;
- You may also be able to obtain a sample of your child's DNA, which may be useful for identification purposes. Be certain that you maintain the only record of the DNA sample.

# How to STAY Prepared



### **If your child is lost or missing:**

- Immediately call the police.
- Search your home and call neighbors or friends.
- Ask that your child be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) missing-person file.
- Keep a list of all steps taken with a record of names and telephone numbers of the contacts you make.
- Try to gather current photographs and be ready to provide a description of your child, including clothing worn at the time of disappearance, personal items taken, and any identifying marks.
- Contact the Arkansas Missing Children Services Program at the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-448-3014 or 501-682-1020.
- Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1-800-THE-LOST).

# Resources

**Office of the Attorney General  
Mike Beebe****Arkansas Missing Children Services Program**

323 Center Street, Suite 1100  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-682-1020  
1-800-448-3014  
[www.ag.state.ar.us](http://www.ag.state.ar.us)

**Arkansas Crime Information Center**

#1 State Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-628-2222  
[www.acic.org](http://www.acic.org)

**Cyber Tip Line  
National Center for****Missing and Exploited Children**

The Charles B. Wang International Children's Building  
699 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3174  
1-800-843-5678  
[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

**Morgan Nick Foundation**

1104 Hwy 64 East  
P.O. Box 1033  
Alma, AR 72921  
501-632-6382  
1-877-543-HOPE  
[www.morgannick.com](http://www.morgannick.com)

**National Runaway Switchboard**

3080 North Lincoln Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60657  
1-800-621-4000  
773-880-9860  
Fax: 773-929-5150  
[www.nrscrisisline.org](http://www.nrscrisisline.org)

**Federal Bureau of Investigation**

J. Edgar Hoover Building  
9th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20535  
General Information 202-324-3000  
Arkansas 501-221-9100  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

**Alcohol and Drug Helpline**

1-800-821-4357

**Arkansas Child Abuse Hot Line**

1-800-482-5964

**Arkansas Teen Crisis Hot Line**

1-800-798-8336

**Families Anonymous**

1-800-736-9805

**Team H.O.P.E.**

1-800-306-6311

**Teenline National Hot Line**

1-800-522-8336 (Noon to Midnight CST)

**National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth**

[www.ncfy.com](http://www.ncfy.com)

**State of Arkansas Division of Human Services**

[www.state.ar.us/childcare](http://www.state.ar.us/childcare)

**The Children's Partnership**

[www.childrenspartnership.org](http://www.childrenspartnership.org)

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Mike Beebe